



CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

24-HOUR REPORT

17 AUGUST 2022

(U) CALIFORNIA

(U) Los Angeles – Report Finds Hate Crimes in Los Angeles Could Set Record This Year

(U) Hate crimes in the city of Los Angeles are on pace to match or surpass last year's record-setting levels, according to a USC analysis. The analysis found that hate crimes against Black, transgender and LGBTQ residents this year were all up significantly compared with the first six months of 2021. There were 596 hate crimes reported by LAPD in 2021, according to USC's analysis, but already by the end of June, 349 have been reported this year. During the same period last year, 299 had been reported. LAPD designates a hate crime as a criminal act targeting gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or disability.

SOURCE: 16 August 2022, [Los Angeles Times](#)

(U) Mill Valley – 'Ghost Gun' Builder Pleads Guilty to Federal Charges

(U) A Mill Valley man who ran a "ghost gun" factory out of his garage pled guilty to unlicensed manufacturing and dealing of firearms, federal prosecutors announced. James William Palmer, 38, could face up to five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines when he is sentenced in December. In his plea agreement, Palmer admitted to illegally building and selling guns between May 2020 and January 2021.

SOURCE: 17 August 2022, [The Mercury News](#)

(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER

(U) New Mexico – Border Patrol Agents Seize Over \$1 Million Worth of Methamphetamines

(U) Las Cruces – Border Patrol agents seized 32.65 pounds of methamphetamine at the Las Cruces checkpoint. The agents seized it at Highway 62/180 checkpoint and stated it was an estimated street value of \$1,044,800.

SOURCE: 16 August 2022, [KFOX 14](#)

(U) NATIONAL

(U) Florida – California Drug Dealer Who Bribed DEA Agents Gets 11+ Years in Prison

(U) Jacksonville – A convicted California drug trafficker who paid bribes to a corrupt Drug Enforcement Administration agent has been sentenced by a Florida judge to more than 11 years in federal prison. A judge in Jacksonville imposed the sentence on Francisco Gonzalez Benitez, 37, of Orange, California. Gonzalez Benitez pleaded guilty to drug and money laundering charges in April. Court documents show Gonzalez Benitez admitted shipping large quantities of cocaine, heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamine from California to Jacksonville and Little Rock, Arkansas, between 2016 and 2019. Prosecutors say Gonzalez Benitez also had worked as an informant for DEA Agent Nathan Koen and paid the agent thousands of dollars in bribes to help provide "top cover protection" for the drug operation.

SOURCE: 16 August 2022, [The Mercury News](#)

(U) Florida – 84 Child Victims Rescued in Sex Trafficking Sting

(U) Miami – A sweeping anti-sex trafficking effort led to the rescue of dozens of missing and exploited

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children, the youngest of whom is 11 years old, according to the FBI. Agents found 84 young victims and 37 missing kids during the nationwide sting dubbed "Operation Cross Country." The two-week effort involved state and local partners as they sought sex trafficking survivors — as well accused traffickers. A total of 85 people were either identified or arrested in connection with human trafficking and child sex crimes, according to the FBI. Those identified will be investigated and could face prosecution. In addition to the child victims, agents also found 141 adults who had been sex trafficked, officials said.

SOURCE: 16 August 2022, [Miami Herald](#)

(U) New York – Authorities Indicted Nine People Involved in Mafia-Led Racket, Including Detective

(U) Brooklyn – Federal authorities say they have busted an organized crime racket reminiscent of the Mafia's heyday, involving illegal gambling parlors in New York City and Long Island and a police detective accused of helping to protect the lucrative schemes. Two indictments unsealed yesterday charged nine people, including the detective, with crimes such as racketeering, illegal gambling, money laundering conspiracy and obstruction of justice. The top federal prosecutor in Brooklyn said the racketeers operated from fronts including a coffee bar, a soccer club, and a shoe repair shop.

SOURCE: 16 August 2022, [Associated Press](#)

(U) Maryland – Judge Rejects Plea Deal in Spy Case

(U) Annapolis – A naval engineer and his wife were to be sentenced yesterday for trying to sell information about nuclear-powered submarines to a foreign government — until the judge rejected their plea deals, saying they were not harsh enough. Jonathan Toebbe and his schoolteacher wife, Diana, were arrested in October and pleaded guilty in February to espionage charges. In a series of dead drops in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Virginia, Jonathan Toebbe passed military secrets to someone he believed to be an agent of another country, but who was actually an undercover FBI agent, authorities said.

SOURCE: 16 August 2022, [CBS News](#)

(U) INTERNATIONAL

(U) Somalia – US Airstrike Kills 14 Al-Shabaab Militants

(U) Hiran – Officials in central Somalia say a US airstrike against al-Shabaab militants has killed 14 fighters, the deadliest strike against the terrorist group in months. The airstrike that targeted al-Qa'ida-linked militant group al-Shabaab took place in Somalia's central region of Hiran. Military officials there said the attack killed 14 al-Shabaab fighters. They say the airstrike was conducted by the US military to support Somali troops who were conducting operations against al-Shabaab. The Somali military said it captured the group's main stronghold in the region, located outside the town of Mahas, and also destroyed its hideouts.

SOURCE: 15 August 2022, [VOA News](#)

(U) Thailand – Multiple Bomb, Arson Attacks Reported in Thailand

(U) Pattani – Explosions and fires ripped through at least 17 locations in Thailand today, in what appeared to be multiple coordinated attacks that injured seven people. The bombings and arson attacks happened after midnight and targeted convenience stores and a gas station across three provinces, lightly injuring at least seven. No one has claimed responsibility for the attacks so far.

SOURCE: 17 August 2022, [Reuters](#)

(U) PREPARED BY THE CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER.

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